



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE *108th* CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 149

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2003

No. 20

Senate

The Senate met at 4 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. STEVENS].

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Dr. William J. Carl III, First Presbyterian Church, Dallas, TX.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

O God, who made Heaven and Earth, we pause in this moment of national grief to remember heroes who have gone on before us. We watched a tear streak across Heaven's face as *Columbia's* brave crew gave their lives for us all. Into Thy hands we commit their spirits as we recommit ourselves to the causes for which they died.

As they reached for the stars, they touched pioneer places that gave us glimpses of Heaven and Earth. So we here on Earth release them into Heaven as we say, "Well done, good and faithful servants." Recalling the sober days of September 11, we realize how fragile all our lives are, and yet how resilient our Nation can be. When our lives come apart, You are always there to help us pick up the pieces.

Pick us up now, Lord. Give us courage and hope for the future that lies ahead as we continue to be one people, under God, with liberty and justice for all. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, I announce that today the Senate will be in a period for morning business from now until 6 p.m., with the time equally divided. Senators have requested time to memorialize and reflect upon the Space Shuttle *Columbia* disaster.

There will be no rollcall votes today because many of the Senators are in Houston for the memorial service for the space shuttle crewmembers. An early adjournment this evening is expected.

I yield to the distinguished assistant minority leader.

WISHES AND HOPE FOR A SPEEDY RECOVERY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I want the record to reflect my expectation that the majority whip will return to work soon. I was saddened to learn that Senator MITCH MCCONNELL had triple bypass surgery. We all know the spunk, spirit, and tenacity he has, and I am confident he will return stronger than ever from that surgery.

On behalf of all Senators, I extend to MITCH and his lovely wife, the Secretary of Labor, Elaine Chao, our best wishes and hope for a speedy recovery.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAFEE). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 6 p.m., with the time to be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Missouri.

EXPRESSING GOOD WISHES

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I join with my good friend from Nevada in expressing our good wishes to the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, as well as our good friend, the distinguished Senator from Florida, who also has undergone a very serious operation. We are a family and our thoughts and concerns of those in this body who have had illnesses are with them. We wish them a very speedy recovery. The Senate will be a bit duller and quieter until they return, but I am confident they will do so soon.

TRIBUTE TO THE SPACE SHUTTLE "COLUMBIA" ASTRONAUTS

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart, which was lifted with the inspiring and thoughtful words of our guest Chaplain. I thank him for helping us see the greater design, the hope for the future, and the good news that we have been given by the Lord.

As did millions of Americans, I spent Saturday watching the dreams of seven brave astronauts streak back to Earth in sadness. The sadness we still feel today, and we will feel for many days, is because those seven astronauts carried our dreams with them.

That is the wonder and the magic of our space program. Our astronauts go into space in large part for those of us who cannot go. Our hearts and our spirits are their cargo. We soar and ride with them into a realm that is beyond the grasp of most men but not beyond the grasp of mankind.

Even while we engage in the somber work of recovering from this terrible accident, in recovering the crew and the *Columbia* itself, our thoughts have already returned to the work of ensuring the safety of the U.S. manned space flight program and of the remaining shuttles. That is one of the responsibilities entrusted to us with the funding and oversight of the space agency.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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